

Application Serial No.: 10/669,552  
Reply to Office Action dated June 22, 2006

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 2-9 are presently pending in this case, Claims 2-4 having been amended and Claims 1 and 10 having been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer by way of the present Amendment. Claims 6-9 have been withdrawn.

In the outstanding Official Action, the abstract of the disclosure was objected to because of minor informalities. Accordingly, a new Abstract of the Disclosure has been added in place of the original abstract. Accordingly, the Applicants request the withdrawal of the objection to the abstract.

Claim 3 was objected to as being a substantial duplicate of Claim 2. The Applicants note that Claim 3 recites a reference guide rail and designation means for designating one of the component supply devices arranged close to the reference guide rail as a main component supply device. Such features are recited in Claim 2, and thus these claims are not duplicates of one another. Accordingly, the Applicants request the withdrawal of the objection to Claim 3.

Claims 2 and 3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Mimura et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,779,259). For the reasons discussed below, the Applicants request the withdrawal of the anticipation rejection.

In the Office Action, the Mimura et al. reference is indicated as anticipating each of Claims 2 and 3. However, the Applicants note that a claim is anticipated only if each and

every element as set forth in the claims is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference. As will be demonstrated below, the Mimura et al. reference clearly does not meet each and every limitation of the independent Claims 2 and 3.

Claims 2 and 3 of the present application each advantageously recite an electronic component mounting apparatus comprising, among other features, designation means for designating one of a pair of component supply devices as a main component supply device, and switching control means for performing a switching control so that the components are supplied from the main component supply device during an ordinary mounting operation, but from a secondary component supply device when the component supply from the main component supply device is discontinued and so that after the replenishment of the main component supply device with the components is completed, the supply of the component is resumed from the main component supply device irrespective of the components being left in the secondary component supply device. (See, e.g., page 13, line 15, through page 15, line 21.) The Mimura et al. reference fails to disclose all of the above limitations.

The Mimura et al. reference describes an apparatus for mounting electronic components that includes a first parts feeding section (1) and a second parts feeding section (2). The Mimura et al. reference describes using the first parts feeding section (1) to supply the components until it runs out of components, and then switching the supply of components to the second parts feeding section (2). While the second parts feeding section (2) is being used, the first parts feeding section (1) is being replenished with components. The apparatus of the Mimura et al. reference continues to supply components using the second parts feeding

section (2) until the second parts feeding section (2) runs out of components, and thereafter switches the supply of components back to the first parts feeding section (1). (See column 5, line 31, through column 6, line 13.)

That is, the Mimura et al. reference is designed to use the two feeding sections (1, 2) in an alternate fashion, and to continue the use of each component feeding section until that feeding section runs out of components before switching to the other feeding section. Thus, the Applicants submit that the Mimura et al. reference fails to disclose or even suggest switching control means for performing a switching control so that the components are supplied from the main component supply device during an ordinary mounting operation, but from a secondary component supply device when the component supply from the main component supply device is discontinued and so that *after the replenishment of the main component supply device with the components is completed, the supply of the component is resumed from the main component supply device irrespective of the components being left in the secondary component supply device*, as recited in Claims 2 and 3. In the Mimura et al. apparatus, there is not provided a switching means that resumes supply of the components from a main component supply device upon replenishment of the main component supply device, but rather switching occurs only when the other supply device runs out of components.

Accordingly, since the Mimura et al. reference does not disclose all of the limitations recited in Claims 2 and 3, the Mimura et al. reference does not anticipate Claims 2 and 3. Thus, the Applicants request the withdrawal of the anticipation rejections of Claims 2 and 3,

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and any claims that depend therefrom.

Claims 4 and 5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mimura et al. in view of Kitamura et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,740,604). For the reasons discussed below, the Applicants request the withdrawal of the obviousness rejection.

The basic requirements for establishing a *prima facie* case of obviousness as set forth in MPEP 2143 include (1) there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings, (2) there must be a reasonable expectation of success, and (3) the reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all of the claim limitations. The Applicants submit that a *prima facie* case of obviousness cannot be established in the present case because the references, either when taken singularly or in combination, do not teach or suggest all of the claim limitations.

Claim 4 of the present application advantageously recites an electronic component mounting apparatus comprising, among other features, designation means for designating one of a pair of component supply devices as a main component supply device, and switching control means for performing a switching control so that the components are supplied from the main component supply device during an ordinary mounting operation, but from a secondary component supply device when the component supply from the main component supply device is discontinued and so that after the replenishment of the main component supply device with the components is completed, the supply of the component is resumed from the main component supply device irrespective of the components being left in the

secondary component supply device.

For the reasons discussed above with respect to Claims 2 and 3, the Applicants submit that the Mimura et al. reference fails to disclose or even suggest switching control means for performing a switching control so that the components are supplied from the main component supply device during an ordinary mounting operation, but from a secondary component supply device when the component supply from the main component supply device is discontinued and so that *after the replenishment of the main component supply device with the components is completed, the supply of the component is resumed from the main component supply device irrespective of the components being left in the secondary component supply device*, as recited in Claim 4.

Furthermore, the Applicants note that the Official Action cites the Kitamura et al. reference to show the provision of a table exchange means (17) for replenishment in an electronic component mounting system, which is cited for the teaching of the component rack of the present invention. However, the Kitamura et al. reference fails to supplement the above noted deficiency in the teachings of the Mimura et al. reference, and thus the combination of these references fails to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness. The Kitamura et al. reference does not disclose designating a main component supply device and switching control means for performing a switching control so that the components are supplied from the main component supply device during an ordinary mounting operation, but from a secondary component supply device when the component supply from the main component supply device is discontinued and so that *after the replenishment of the main*

*component supply device with the components is completed, the supply of the component is resumed from the main component supply device irrespective of the components being left in the secondary component supply device, as recited in Claim 4.*

The present invention provides a unique apparatus in which a main component supply device is designated and after replenishing of the main component supply device with components is completed, the switching to the main component supply device is made irrespective of components being left in the secondary component supply device. That is, the present invention is configured to use the main component supply device on a priority basis. Thus, the operator can devote himself to replenish components to the main component supply device, which runs short of components at a higher frequency than the secondary component supply device, and the operator is relieved of frequently moving to the secondary component supply device side for component replenishing works. (See page 15, lines 5-21, of the present application.) Consequently, it can be realized that the operator can perform the component replenishing work efficiently and easily.

Accordingly, since the cited references fail to disclose all of the limitations recited in Claim 4, either when taken singularly or in combination, the Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the obviousness rejection thereof.

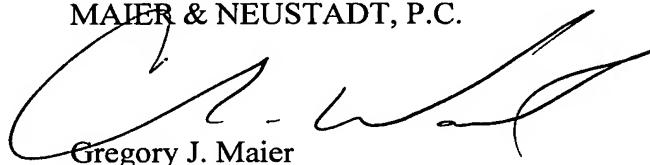
Claim 5 is considered allowable for at least the reasons advanced for Claim 2 from which it depends.

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Consequently, in view of the above discussion, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for formal allowance and an early and favorable reconsideration of this application is therefore requested.

Respectfully Submitted,

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